

Carroll County Public Schools Operating Efficiencies and Cost Avoidance

Carroll County Public Schools has creatively shifted expenditures in its overall operating budget as outlined below. These strategies have been completed annually since 2009 and resulted in a total shift from our discretionary spending to non-discretionary spending by almost \$30 million. It is also important to note that, including student transportation, 87% of our budget is tied to employee salary and benefits.

STAFFING

Eliminated Positions –279.5 FTE positions eliminated. Does not include school closure FTE.

- Central Office – 44.3 positions
- Teachers – 155.5
- School Counselors – 8.0
- Custodians – 29.5
- Clerical – 22.30
- Instructional Assistants – 7.5
- School-Based Administrators – 5.0
- Bus Drivers/Assistants – 4.0
- Media Specialists – 3.4

Reduced work-year – Through negotiations, CCPS worked with both the Carroll County Education Association (teachers, nurses, media specialists, school counselors), and the Carroll Association of School Employees, to reduce their contracted work-year.

Reassigned kindergarten assistants – Rather than employ additional staff to provide needed classroom support to elementary schools, CCPS expanded the duties of kindergarten assistants to provide services in all elementary classrooms.

Reduced costs through outsourcing – A cost benefit analysis is performed, as needed, to determine whether to outsource services or hire additional employees. Accordingly, CCPS made a decision to eliminate school system owned buses and rely on a contractor fleet for student transportation and contract with agencies for temporary work load assignments.

Froze employee salaries – Since 2009, employees' only received two ongoing compensation increases, one step advance and one COLA.

INCREASED EFFICIENCIES

Increased efficiency in student transportation – Realigned school start times to allow for buses to run three routes instead of two, thereby allowing the elimination of 40 buses from our contractor fleet.

Reduced overhead costs for Food Services Program – Purchased and implemented point-of-sales hardware that included inventory control, less reliance on cash, and more efficient food preparation processes. As a result, we reduced storage of food through, “just in time” inventory controls and were able to reduce staff. Food Services went from operating in the red to profit-making status over the past three years.

Reduced telecommunications costs – Significantly reduced annual recurring telecommunications cost by eliminating the Verizon Centrex system and utilizing the fiber network for a Voice-Over IP system. The system was implemented centrally in 2005 and phased in at all schools as the network was completed. In addition, the fiber network allowed for the total elimination of leased circuits for the maintenance of the wide-area-network and ISP service. The cost-savings allowed for increases in technology spending in other areas (implementing a replacement cycle and significantly improving the student to computer ratios), without increasing the technology budget.

Reduced utility costs – Reduced demand on utilities by changing our lighting, fixtures, and heat and cooling plants to use more efficient and less costly fuels. In addition, we installed a system-wide centralized monitoring control system throughout the school system to more efficiently monitor the use of utilities. To reduce the per unit cost of utilities, CCPS joined utilities purchasing consortiums with other counties to monitor and then lock in utilities rates at low rates for long-term contracts. These purchasing consortiums allow CCPS to avoid marketplace fluctuations and promote budget stability.

Reduced cost with the use of purchasing co-ops – CCPS not only competitively bids all school system purchases, but takes advantage of recent State law changes that allow for piggy-backing on all State and Municipality bids greatly reducing the cost of consumables.

Reduced insurance renewal cost through rebidding – CCPS marketed and rebid all health, property, life, and casualty insurance, thereby greatly avoiding large renewal increases.

Avoided increasing technology staffing while increasing technology infrastructure – CCPS competitively bid multiple service contracts with vendors, such as Dell, to provide integration and warranty services as part of the purchase of hardware. CCPS has also strategically utilized contract and hourly staff for targeted initiatives. Technology Services also implemented an intern program with the Career Technology Center. This mutually beneficial program has resulted in several eventual full-time and hourly opportunities for former CCPS students. While still significantly under-resourced, CCPS has creatively used these methods to address the significant increase in technology use.

Reduced additional technology costs – CCPS has further reduced needs for increasing technology costs by investing in the efficiencies that the technology creates such as a centralized data center, remote helpdesk support, web-based application development, remote computer deployment, etc.

Reduced technology infrastructure expansion costs – By forming and leading the Carroll County Public Network for the past 12 years with County Government, Carroll County Public Library, and Carroll County Community College, we were able to utilize economies of scale for all entities to build out wired and wireless networks for public use. This allowed for streamlined and standardized solutions related to telecommunications, surveillance, disaster recovery/business continuity, etc. The cooperative efforts of the 4 Information Technology Departments also contributed to other cost-saving collaborations.

Implemented paperless payroll – CCPS has eliminated the costs associated with the printing and mailing of payroll checks by mandating direct deposit and creating the Employee Access Center. At that Intra-network site, from their home computer, employees can access and print all payroll stubs, change bank affiliations, print W2 forms, etc.

Revised the procurement card program – CCPS marketed and procured a new P-Card program that allows for lucrative rebates for school system purchases. The system also monitors, detects, and alerts CCPS of the potential misuse of P-Cards. Further, the program reduces the manual accounts payable process and the electronic payment of vendors. Thus far, CCPS has earned over \$200,000 in rebates.

ELIMINATED PROGRAMS/DEPARTMENTS

Eliminated two Central Office departments – The Superintendent eliminated both the Office of Staff Development and Minority Achievement and Intervention Programs and reassigned those duties to other departments.

Restructured Central Office departments – The Superintendent restructured both the Human Resources Department and the Special Education Department to provide more specific services to schools without the need to add staff.

Revised the school-based administrator staffing formula – Reduced the number of assistant principals assigned to each high school.

Revised the school-based clerical staffing formula – Reduced the number of clericals assigned to each school.

Increased custodial cleaning square footage – Reduced the number of custodians assigned to each school.

Eliminated after school programs – Prior to 2010, CCPS offered afterschool programs to eligible students for tutoring, snacks, and physical activities. The programs were known as Community Learning Centers. They were highly successful and well attended, but costly.

Eliminated centralized professional development for staff – Due to the elimination of the Central Office staff, professional development for staff was decentralized and added to the responsibilities of the building principal and school-based staff.

Restructured school-based student intervention department – Eliminated positions in high schools and restructured new positions to combine student services functions.

Eliminated stabilization funds within budget categories – Eliminated within operating budget all stabilization funds for employee health insurance, utilities, diesel fuel, and Worker's Compensation.

Eliminated or reduced the following budget categories:

- School Maintenance Projects
- Furniture, Equipment, and Replacement Funds
- Travel
- Professional Development
- Food for Meetings
- Hourly Employees
- Consultants
- Vehicle Usage
- Teacher Recruiting
- Supplies and Materials

INCREASED FEES AND CHARGES

Revised Community Use of Facilities regulations – Began assessing charges on a per square foot basis for use of school facilities.

Increased athletic fees for students – Students now pay an athletic fee that helps offset transportation costs.

Charging for fingerprinting – Applicants now pay all fingerprinting charges.

NEW INITIATIVES

Automated time and attendance – CCPS is currently eliminating paper time cards and moving to an automated system. This will greatly increase efficiencies within the system and accuracies with employee pay.

Elimination of contracted services for online Board materials – This year CCPS will eliminate contracted services for online Board materials and implement an in-house version.

Closed three schools – Increases overall facility utilization to 88% at the high school level; 91% at the middle school level; and 84% at the elementary level. Reduced the number of capacity seats by 1,909. Will reduce the employee base by an additional 55.2 FTE and reduce ongoing operating expenditures by an additional \$ 5 million.

Boundary line adjustments and two additional school closures – To be discussed by Board at a future date.